

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Washington, D.C.

Profile of Drug Indicators

March 2003



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Washington, D.C.

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- Population: 571,822 (2001 estimate); 572,059 (2000 Census); 606,900 (1990 Census)
- Race/Ethnicity (2000 Census): 27.8% white; 59.4% black/African American; 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native; 2.6% Asian; 0.0% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 7.9% Hispanic/Latino; 0.3% other race; 1.7% two or more races.

Politics

- Mayor: Anthony A. Williams²
- City Council: Sandra Allen; Sharon Ambrose; Harold Brazil; David Catania; Kevin Chavous; Linda Cropp; Jack Evans; Adrian Fenty; Jim Graham; Phil Mendelson; Vincent Orange, Sr.; Kathleen Patterson; Carol Schwartz³
- Chief of Police: Charles H. Ramsey⁴
- Congressional Representative: Eleanor Holmes Norton⁵

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁶
Designated in 1994, the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA targets drug traffickers and drug trafficking organizations in the Washington, D.C./Baltimore region. The area's interstate highways, rail and bus systems, three major airports, and international seaport combine to create a substantial challenge to interdiction initiatives.
- Operation Crackdown⁷
The Operation Crackdown program provides community groups with free legal representation to combat problems such as crack houses and open air drug markets. Operation Crackdown attorneys use civil courts and city agencies to force owners of problem properties to stop illegal drug use, sales and manufacturing in the properties.
- Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration⁸
The mission of this D.C. Department of Health program is to keep District residents from becoming dependant on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and to help addicted residents return to sobriety. Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration provides the following services: prevention, detoxification, residential treatment, youth services, programs for persons with HIV/AIDS; and aftercare programs.

Federal Funding

- Drug-Free Communities Support Program Grantees in Washington, D.C.:⁹
 - FY 2002: no grantees
 - FY 2001: \$100,000 to the D.C. Coalition Against Drugs and Violence
 - FY 2000: \$100,000 to the D.C. Community Prevention Partnership
 - FY 1998 and 1999: no grantees
- Executive Office for Weed and Seed¹⁰
There are six areas of Washington, D.C. that have received Federal funding and are officially recognized as Weed and Seed sites: Carver Terrace/Langston Dwellings;

Columbia Heights; Congress Heights; Ivy City/Trinidad; Marshall Heights/Eastgate; and the North Capitol Area.

- FY 2001/2002 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Formula and Discretionary Grant Allotments Summary for D.C.:¹¹
 - Formula Funding - \$7,715,044
 - Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant - \$6,156,871
 - Community Mental Health Services Block Grant - \$873,273
 - Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) - \$300,000
 - Protection and Advocacy Formula Grant - \$384,900
 - Discretionary Funding - \$22,004,238
 - Mental Health - \$12,132,146
 - Substance Prevention - \$4,693,416
 - Substance Abuse Treatment - \$5,178,676
 - Total Mental Health Funds: \$13,690,319
 - Total Substance Abuse Funds: \$16,028,963
 - Total Funds for Washington, D.C.: \$29,719,282
- FY 2002 Byrne Formula Grant Program amount awarded to D.C.: \$2,078,472¹²
- FY 2001 Residential Substance Abuse Treatment for State Prisoners Formula Grant amount allocated to Washington, D.C.: \$470,138¹³
- FY 2001 Housing and Urban Development Drug Elimination Grant amounts received in Washington, D.C.: \$125,000 to Columbia Heights Village Apartments.¹⁴
- No Washington, D.C. grantees received funding through the FY 2002 Office of Justice Programs Drug Court grant program.¹⁵

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- The District has approximately sixty open-air drug markets that are controlled by neighborhood crews.¹⁶
- Preliminary data indicate that there were 33,097 index offenses reported in Washington, D.C. from January through October 2002.¹⁷

Number of Index Offenses Known to Police, D.C., Jan. through Oct. 2001 and 2002

	Through 10/01	Through 10/02	Percent Change
Homicide	185	212	14.6%
Sexual assault	286	277	-3.1%
Robbery	3,573	3,392	-5.1%
Aggravated assault	3,510	3,550	1.1%
Burglary	4,270	4,360	2.1%
Theft (not from auto)	6,509	5,880	-9.7%
Theft from auto	9,903	8,926	-9.9%
Stolen auto	5,875	6,426	9.4%
Arson	65	74	13.8%
Total index offenses	34,176	33,097	-3.2%

- During full year 2001, there were 44,489 index offenses known to the D.C. Police.¹⁸

Number of Index Offenses Known to Police, Washington, D.C., 1997-2001

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Homicide	301	260	241	242	233
Forcible rape	218	190	248	251	181
Robbery	4,499	3,606	3,344	3,553	3,777
Aggravated assault	5,688	4,932	4,616	4,582	5,003
Burglary	6,963	6,361	5,067	4,745	4,947
Larceny/theft	26,748	24,321	21,673	21,637	22,274
Stolen auto	7,569	6,501	6,652	6,600	7,970
Arson	150	119	105	108	104
Total index offenses	52,136	46,290	41,946	41,718	44,489

- The U.S. Park Police reported in the National Drug Threat Survey 2001 that thirty-five percent of its 1,583 D.C. investigations were drug-related.¹⁹
- During 1999, 68.9 percent of D.C. adult male arrestees tested positive for drugs.²⁰

Percent of Adult Male Arrestees Positive for Drugs, D.C., 1999

Offense Type	Cocaine	Marijuana	Metham.	PCP	Any Drug
Violent	23.5%	35.3%	0.0%	0.0%	52.9%
Property	45.0	35.0	0.0	5.0	75.0
Drug	44.1	50.0	2.9	5.9	85.3
Sales	23.1	61.5	0.0	7.7	76.9
Possession	52.2	47.8	4.3	8.7	91.3
Other	37.2	20.9	0.0	7.0	58.1

Drugs

- Cocaine
Violence associated with the crack trade remains high in Washington, D.C.²¹ Crack cocaine is primarily abused in low income, inner-city housing projects.²² Crack smoked in marijuana joints is occasionally reported, typically among younger users. While the predominant powder cocaine users are black individuals over age 30 who inject the drug, an emerging group has been reported: young adult (age 18-30) white males who snort the drug. Cocaine injectors are finding it increasingly difficult to find powder cocaine, so some are shooting crack instead.²³ In FY 2001, a gram of powder cocaine sold for \$50-100, while a gram of crack sold for \$80-100 in D.C.²⁴ The cocaine found in D.C. is typically 30-60% pure.²⁵
- Heroin
High purity snortable South American (Colombian) white heroin and Southeast Asian heroin are considered widely available in Washington, D.C.²⁶ While low-purity heroin is purchased and injected by long-term users, high purity heroin is purchased (particularly in Northwest D.C.) and snorted by a predominantly younger and more suburban abuser population from Maryland and Virginia. Between FY 1999 and FY 2001, heroin purity levels in D.C. ranged from 46.6% to 51.9%.²⁷ Quinine is a new adulterant that is being used to increase the heroin "rush." Meat tenderizer and flour are additional heroin adulterants. One gram of heroin sells for \$120-\$150.²⁸

- **Marijuana**
 Marijuana is the most readily available, least expensive, and widely abused illicit drug in D.C. Marijuana is sometimes mixed with crack or PCP in blunts.²⁹ Hydroponically grown marijuana is widely available.³⁰ One ounce of commercial marijuana sells for \$100, while one ounce of hydroponic marijuana sells for \$480.³¹
- **Methamphetamine**
 Methamphetamine is increasingly available and abused in D.C. but is not yet considered a serious problem. The methamphetamine available in D.C. is approximately 70% pure and costs between \$60 and \$100 per gram. Teens and young adults abuse methamphetamine, particularly crystal methamphetamine, in combination with other drugs at nightclubs and raves.³²
- **Club Drugs**
 MDMA, Ketamine, GHB, crystal methamphetamine and other hallucinogenic and stimulant drugs have been in demand and readily available in D.C. for nearly a decade.³³ Club owners, bartenders, and bouncers are increasingly allowing people to sell MDMA on their premises. MDMA pills range in price from \$18-\$35.³⁴ Counterfeit MDMA tablets are sometimes sold containing substances such as methamphetamine, ketamine, cocaine, or PCP. GHB is sold at nightclubs, raves, bars, and universities for \$10-20 per dosage unit.³⁵
- **Other Drugs**
 The diversion of prescribed substances is a continuing problem in the District. Prescription painkillers and methadone are in high demand and are readily available.³⁶ Hydromorphone and diverted OxyContin are sometimes used as heroin substitutes, while alprazolam, clonazepam, and other diverted pharmaceuticals are used either to boost or “take off the rough edges” from heroin.³⁷ D.C. police report that OxyContin is frequently sold outside heroin treatment facilities.³⁸ OxyContin typically sells for \$1.50-\$2.00/milligram in D.C.³⁹
- Based on data from 1999 and 2000, approximately 7% of persons ages 12 and older in Washington, D.C. reported past month use of an illicit drug.⁴⁰

Percent Reporting Drug Use and Dependence, by Age Group, Washington, D.C., 2000

Drug Characteristic	Total	Age Group		
		12-17	18-25	26 +
Based on 1999 and 2000 Pooled Data:				
Past month any illicit drug use	7.05	9.39	16.87	5.02
Past month marijuana use	5.23	7.25	12.48	3.69
Past month use of illicit drug other than marij.	3.20	4.33	6.21	2.52
Past year cocaine use	2.08	0.89	4.12	1.88
Perception of great risk of smoking marijuana once a month	44.48	37.70	27.34	48.39
Average annual rate of first use of marijuana	1.48	5.54	5.28	0.13
Based on 2000 Data Only:				
Past year illicit drug dependence	1.48	1.86	3.68	0.99
Past year illicit drug dependence or abuse	2.46	4.00	5.73	1.65
Past year alcohol/illicit drug depend. or abuse	7.11	6.68	16.61	5.44

Juveniles

- Approximately twenty percent of Washington, D.C. high school students surveyed in 2001 reported being current users of marijuana.⁴¹

Percent of High School Students Reporting Selected Drug Use, by Gender, D.C., 2001

	Female	Male	Total
Lifetime marijuana use	34.0%	39.2%	36.5%
Current marijuana use	16.6	23.8	20.2
Lifetime cocaine use	4.6	7.1	6.0
Current cocaine use	2.4	3.1	2.8
Lifetime inhalant use	6.9	10.2	9.0
Current inhalant use	2.5	3.1	3.0
Lifetime heroin use	3.2	5.7	4.6
Lifetime methamphetamine use	4.5	8.4	6.6
Lifetime illegal steroid use	2.8	4.7	4.2
Lifetime injecting illegal drug use	1.6	4.3	3.2

- Over forty-three percent of 12th graders reported using marijuana at least once during their lifetime.⁴²

Percent of High School Students Reporting Selected Drug Use, by Grade, D.C., 2001

	9th	10th	11th	12th
Lifetime marijuana use	31.4%	35.8%	40.4%	43.3%
Current marijuana use	18.6	20.5	20.4	21.3
Lifetime cocaine use	7.5	4.2	7.5	3.2
Current cocaine use	3.4	1.6	4.2	1.1
Lifetime inhalant use	10.6	7.9	10.6	6.4
Current inhalant use	3.8	1.6	4.5	2.6
Lifetime heroin use	5.2	4.0	4.8	3.1
Lifetime methamphetamine use	5.8	7.2	7.9	4.3
Lifetime steroid use	3.3	2.8	7.7	3.7
Lifetime injection of illegal drug	2.9	2.4	5.4	2.7

Enforcement

- Washington/Baltimore HIDTA Initiatives:⁴³
 - Caribbean Initiative: Members of this task force target the growing threat posed by New York City-based Dominican drug trafficking organizations and their Caribbean associates who concentrate their operations in D.C.
 - Street Terrorist Offender Initiative: Supervised by ATF, this initiative conducts long-term, complex investigations targeting street gangs and other drug trafficking organizations that distribute narcotics and firearms in D.C. public housing complexes.
 - Regional Drug Interdiction Initiative: This initiative, supervised by the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, identifies and arrests individuals using bus and

- Other Washington/Baltimore HIDTA initiatives involving D.C. include the following: DEA Cross Border Initiative; Prince George’s County Cross Border Initiative; Regional Airport Drug Interdiction Initiative; Northern Virginia Drug Initiative; Northern Virginia Regional Crack Initiative; Washington, D.C. Area Gang Initiative; Regional Drug Interdiction Initiative; Money Laundering Initiative; and the Washington, D.C. Treatment Initiative.

The Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department Open-Air MiniStations are highly visible picnic table-and-chair sets that serve as outdoor, portable police facilities. The MiniStations serve two main purposes: to let drug dealers, gang members, and other criminals know that illegal activity will not be tolerated in the community; and to help law-abiding residents with information and assistance for building safe and healthy neighborhoods.

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Amount of Federal Drug Seizures, Washington, D.C., 2001

Drug Type	Amount Seized
Cocaine	18.7 kgs.
Heroin	9.1 kgs.
Marijuana	34.5 kgs.
Methamphetamine	0.1 kgs.
Clandestine labs	0

- During FY 2000, more than fifty kilograms of marijuana were seized as part of the Federal-wide Drug Seizure System (FDSS). FDSS contains information about drug seizures made within the jurisdiction of the DEA, FBI, U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Customs Service.⁵⁶

FDSS Drug Seizures (in Kilograms), Washington, D.C., FY 1995-2000

Year	Cocaine	Heroin	Marijuana	Methamphet.
FY 1995	33.7	11.5	4.6	--*
FY 1996	58.5	16.0	23.2	--*
FY 1997	39.8	9.5	48.8	--*
FY 1998	27.8	14.9	44.5	2.6
FY 1999	23.3	7.8	119.0	0.1
FY 2000	32.0	5.8	50.6	0.5

*Not available

- The U.S. Park Police seized 221 grams of powdered cocaine and 1.9 kilograms of crack cocaine in Washington, D.C. during 2000.⁵⁷

U.S. Park Police Seizures, Washington, D.C., 1999-2000

Drug Type	1999	2000
Powdered cocaine	9 grams	221 grams
Crack cocaine	11 kilograms	1.9 kilograms
Heroin	258 grams	398 grams
Marijuana	5.2 kilograms	10.8 kilograms
Methamphetamine	22 grams	1.1 grams

- In 2000, there were thirty-six airport seizures and twenty-three mail seizures in D.C. that involved marijuana.⁵⁸

Courts

- Drug Courts⁵⁹
As of January 8, 2003, there was one drug court that has been operating for over two years, one drug court that was recently implemented, and one drug court being planned in Washington, D.C.
- Washington was the first city in the country to test arrestees for drugs as a condition of pretrial release.⁶⁰

- During FY 2001, 37.8% of Federally-sentenced defendants in D.C. were charged with drug offenses. Crack cocaine was involved in 55.8% (58) of the drug offenses.⁶¹

Federally-Sentenced Drug Offenders, by Drug Type, D.C., FY 2001

Drug Type	Number	Percent of Total
Crack cocaine	58	55.8%
Heroin	20	19.2%
Powder cocaine	17	16.3%
Marijuana	8	7.7%
Methamphetamine	0	0.0%
Other	1	1.0%

Corrections

- As of October 30, 2002, one-quarter (24.9%) of the D.C. inmates were charged with committing drug offenses. The average sentence length received by the drug offenders was five years.⁶²
- The average D.C. inmate population was 10,127 in FY 2001.⁶³
- The number of adults on probation in D.C. decreased from 10,664 on January 1, 2001 to 10,468 on December 31, 2001. The number of adults on parole also decreased during 2001 from 5,332 at the beginning of the year to 4,453 by the end of the year.⁶⁴

Consequences of Use

- Preliminary data indicate that there were 4,272 drug abuse episodes reported to the Drug Abuse Warning Network from D.C. emergency departments from January to June 2002. During full year 2001, there were 7,210 drug abuse episodes.⁶⁵

Number of ED Drug Mentions, Selected Drugs, Washington, D.C, 1998-June 2002*

Drug Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002*
Alcohol-in-combination	3,270	2,745	2,300	2,774	1,239
Cocaine	3,718	3,150	2,830	2,894	1,032
Heroin	2,097	1,771	1,946	1,888	591
Marijuana	2,360	2,516	2,510	2,135	843
Amphetamines	--	--	--	--	--
Methamphetamine	16	33	62	24	20
MDMA	23	--	78	110	46
Ketamine	4	3	7	--	0
LSD	49	87	45	25	4
PCP	152	176	317	525	351
Miscellaneous hallucinogens	21	12	--	--	0
Flunitrazepam	0	0	0	0	0
GHB	4	13	24	15	6
Inhalants	15	--	--	--	--
Total drug episodes	11,596	10,282	10,303	10,566	4,272
Total drug mentions (all drugs)	19,054	16,936	16,229	17,480	7,210

* 2002 data are preliminary and only for January to June

- During 2001, there were 53 drug-related deaths reported to DAWN by Medical Examiners (ME) in Washington, D.C. Cocaine was mentioned in 42 of the deaths.⁶⁶

Number of Drug Abuse Deaths and ME Drug Mentions, Washington, D.C., 1997-2001

Drug Type	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Alcohol-in-combination	29	44	37	26	17
Cocaine	33	63	64	54	42
Heroin/morphine	41	53	41	36	15
Marijuana	--	--	--	1	1
Amphetamines	--	--	--	1	--
Methamphetamine	--	1	--	1	--
Club drugs	--	--	--	--	--
Hallucinogens	1	--	2	1	3
Inhalants	--	--	--	--	--
Narcotic analgesics	6	22	15	20	6
Other analgesics	2	3	3	2	1
Benzodiazepines	13	13	11	10	1
Antidepressants	4	14	11	4	1
All other substances	7	30	18	10	1
Total drug deaths	79	145	121	100	53
Total drug mentions (all drugs)	136	243	202	166	88

- Throughout the D.C. metropolitan area, which includes Washington, D.C. and jurisdictions in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, there were 193 drug-related deaths reported to DAWN in 2001.⁶⁷

Drug Abuse Deaths and Drug Mentions, Washington, D.C. Metro Area, 1997-2001

Drug Type	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Alcohol-in-combination	84	103	85	81	66
Cocaine	81	121	106	107	90
Heroin/morphine	107	117	95	84	64
Marijuana	1	--	--	3	1
Amphetamines	1	--	--	1	--
Methamphetamine	1	1	5	1	1
Club drugs	--	--	--	1	1
Hallucinogens	5	4	4	9	11
Inhalants	--	--	--	--	--
Narcotic analgesics	47	62	55	72	70
Other analgesics	23	25	24	22	14
Benzodiazepines	32	23	19	22	19
Antidepressants	48	50	57	47	58
All other substances	107	117	101	75	77
Total drug deaths	224	281	239	235	193
Total drug mentions	538	623	551	525	472

Treatment

- During 2001, 5,684 people were admitted to drug/alcohol treatment in Washington, D.C.⁶⁸ In 2000, there were 6,025 treatment admissions in D.C.⁶⁹ There were 6,056 treatment admissions in 1999.⁷⁰

Number of Admissions to Treatment, Washington, D.C., 1999-2001

Primary Drug of Abuse	1999		2000		2001	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Alcohol only	821	13.6%	687	11.4%	673	11.7%
Alc. w/ second. drug	411	6.8	582	9.7	436	7.6
Cocaine – smoked	1,929	31.9	1,626	27.0	2,165	37.7
Cocaine – other route	300	5.0	448	7.4	24	0.4
Marijuana	750	12.4	484	8.0	1,450	25.3
Heroin	1,790	29.6	2,121	35.2	474	8.3
Other opiates	21	0.3	15	0.2	367	6.4
PCP	26	0.4	43	0.7	33	0.6
Hallucinogens	--	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
Amphetamines	5	0.1	14	0.2	105	1.8
Other stimulants	--	0.0	--	0.0	2	0.0
Tranquilizers	--	0.0	2	0.0	1	0.0
Sedatives	--	0.0	--	0.0	2	0.0
Inhalants	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0
Other/none specified	3	0.0	2	0.0	2	0.0
Total	6,056	100.0	6,025	100.0	5,736	100.0

- After September 11, the number of admissions to drug treatment in D.C. increased.⁷¹
- Drug sales regularly take place in the vicinity of D.C. drug treatment clinics. Legislative efforts are currently under way to stiffen the penalties for selling near clinics.⁷²

Sources

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³ Washington, D.C. City Council Web site: <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/>

⁴ Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department Web site: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/main.shtm>

⁵ U.S. House of Representatives Web site: <http://clerk.house.gov/members/index.php>

⁶ Office of National Drug Control Policy, Washington D.C./Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Web site: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/frames_dc.html

⁷ D.C. Metropolitan Police Department Web site, Operation Crackdown: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/comm/crackdown.shtm>

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⁹ Drug-Free Communities Support Program Web site: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/dfcs/index.html>

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